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THRU : Deputy Chief, Economic Research, ORR
THRU : Chief, Industrial Division, ORR
THRU : Chief, Guided Missile Branch, D/I

15 October 1958

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Exchange of Christmas Cards Among ERA Personnel

1. You will recall that last December I made the suggestion that instead of exchanging Christmas cards among themselves, ERA personnel might like to adopt a plan similar to one which has been carried out with notable success in the Library of Congress: for some years several components of LC have been contributing to CARE an amount equal to that which they would normally have spent on Christmas cards for their colleagues. The idea was favorably received by everyone in the ERA who was approached for an opinion, and you and Ch/E forwarded it to the AD/ER, with the thought that it might be adopted for the Office. The AD/ER was in agreement in principle, but the idea was never put into effect because it was felt that this kind of suggestion should not come from supervisory channels. At that time, it was too late to submit it in any other manner.

2. I think the AD/ER's position last year was well-taken, and that any such suggestion should come from and be agreed to by "the ranks". I still feel the idea itself has merit, however, and therefore, should like to propose, while there is still time, a different approach this year.

a. At an early Staff Meeting (preferably this month), Ch/E could present the idea as a proposal which came from an analyst. The Division and Staff Chiefs could be requested to carry it back to their components, where it could be discussed by the working level at Branch and Staff Meetings. Each component could then take an informal vote as to whether or not the majority considered the idea a good one. (If the majority were in favor of the suggestion, the adoption of it could still remain optional as far as each individual were concerned.)

b. If the idea were adopted, a box could be placed in each Division and Staff Office labeled "Christmas Contributions for CARE" around the first of December. The Administrative Assistants of each component could be custodians of the money and would be responsible for removing the boxes the last Friday before Christmas and turning the money over to some central point, such as Ch/E's office, or St/PR.

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SUBJECT: Exchange of Christmas Cards Among ERA Personnel

3. In presenting the idea at Staff Meeting, it is suggested that the following be covered:

a. The sending of Christmas cards is a traditional method of renewing old acquaintances and generally spreading Christmas cheer. Many people feel, however, that exchange of this sort among colleagues with whom one is in almost daily contact at the office is somewhat perfunctory, and that perhaps there is some other gesture that might better express the Christmas spirit. Although any charity would be grateful for a gift, it has been suggested that CARE would be a singularly appropriate recipient. By sharing materially with persons who have little or no food, warm clothing or shelter - to say nothing of the "extras" of the Yuletide season - we would be sharing, spiritually, in the real meaning of Christmas.

b. It should be stressed that if the plan were adopted, participation would be purely voluntary, and anyone who preferred to send Christmas cards should feel perfectly free to do so. For those who cared to participate, a suggested amount could be that which would be equal to what the individual felt he would ordinarily have spent on Christmas cards and postage for his office colleagues.

4. I believe it would be best to restrict this plan to the ERA this year. If the rest of O&A is interested, they can join with us or follow our example in the future. By keeping it within the ERA, moreover, I think there would be less likelihood of last year's valid objections being raised again.

5. If the plan is adopted, I will attempt to find out from the Office of Security if there is any unclassified name or designation under which we could contribute as a group. If not, the gift could be anonymous.

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